



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmember Sam Liccardo

SUBJECT: INSTALLATION OF 65-FOOT
TALL MONOPINE AND
ASSOCIATED GROUND
MOUNTED EQUIPMENT
FACILITY

DATE: September 19, 2014

APPROVED:

Sam Liccardo FB

9-19-14

RECOMMENDATION

Grant the appeal and deny the issuance of a Conditional Use Permit to allow installation of a 65-foot tall monopole (monopine) with associated ground mounted equipment facility.

DISCUSSION

As is stated in the staff report, the General Plan supports the “provision of **state-of-the-art** telecommunication services for households, businesses, institutions, and public agencies throughout the city to foster fiscal sustainability, an innovative economy, support environmental leadership, **meet the needs** of quality neighborhoods and advance other *Envision General Plan* goals.” Contrary to the staff report, however, the device at issue here is no longer “state-of-the-art.” Communication antennae like the one being proposed here are quickly becoming yesterday’s technology.

In cities across the United States and Europe, small-cell technology will soon become the standard. Small cells are essentially miniature cellular base stations. These miniature base stations are smarter, cheaper, less obtrusive, and easier to install than traditional towers. For that reason, they can be constructed in ways that naturally blend in with the surrounding landscape; even fitting into places as small as a trash can.

Locally, the City of San Jose has recently been approached by Philips and other companies regarding the installation of “SmartPoles” at various sites in and around the city. “SmartPoles” integrate small-cell technology into existing street light poles to densify networks and provide the required capacity for mobile data, enabling new data-heavy applications on mobile devices.

The result is a structure very much resembling a standard street light pole. It is a much smaller and sleeker alternative to the "monopine" being proposed here.

As for whether the proposed "monopine" is necessary to "meet the needs" of the neighborhood, there appeared to be conflicting information provided at the planning director and commission hearings. Certainly, the residents that spoke at these hearings believe the project is unnecessary. Furthermore, even the A, T & T representative appeared to state that the project is not necessary to meet current demand, but instead is something they are building for the future.

We should not approve yesterday's technology to meet tomorrow's demand. The residents in and around the proposed site deserve better.